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The Buffer Zone (from "Inside the Ropes" series), 2002-2003, acrylic on canvas, 72 x 68.25 in. Cat. no. 61.



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The Immediacy of the Game: 50 Years of Ted Potter's Art
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Acknowledgements

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We are especially indebted to Edward Albee for the kind contribution of his comments published as a foreword to the catalog. Thanks also go to Hayes Henderson and his team at Henderson Bromstead Art for their work in designing this beautiful publication, and to Jackson Smith for his outstanding photography for the catalog. I would be remiss in not thanking the entire SECCA staff for their assistance with this project--in particular Amy Garland, SECCA's PR/Marketing Coordinator, and Lyndon Bray, SECCA's Installations Manager. Lyndon was assisted in installing the exhibition by Anthony Lowe and Hannah Crowell. Thanks also goes to Angie Debnam, SECCA's Programs Assistant, for her help with so many details relating to the exhibition.

A very special panel discussion was held in conjunction with the opening of "The Immediacy of the Game: 50 Years of Ted Potter's Art" on July 21, 2006. Thanks to panelists Milton Rhodes, President and CEO of the Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, who served as moderator; Tom Patterson, guest curator; New Orleans-based artist Jacqueline Bishop; and Dr. Harry Rand, Senior Curator of Cultural History, Smithsonian Institution. Thanks also to Margaret Norfleet-Neff and John Neff for social gatherings they held in their home to help celebrate the exhibition's opening. Thanks to Lee Hansley for co-hosting these gatherings.

It is also appropriate to recognize the general support that SECCA receives from the James G. Hanes Memorial Fund/Foundation, the Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, and the North Carolina Arts Council. Their support allows SECCA to undertake projects such as this one.

Foreword

JOY

-the art of Ted Potter-

I have known many painters in my time, some of them very famous--Rothko, Johns (Jasper, not Gwen, though I admire her work a lot, too) among others--and the relationship, among the best of them, between what they do and who they are melds, and the result is the art-artist combine with the art, though impossible without the artist, becoming paramount. (Even such a duality as Duchamp--self and art equally front and center--gave us, ultimately, work--art about art--that changed our understanding of that process as fully as that of Picasso or Malevich or Pollock.)

In his quiet, democratic, anti-egotistical way Ted Potter, through humor, talent, knowledge and utility has accomplished much that is the same.

As an educator (a populist one--and where have most of them gone, by the way?) he has spent a lifetime encouraging informed joy--as I like to call it--bringing art to the people--not down to them, but straight in the eye. As a painter, the same informed joy has given us a variety of work--abstract, socially conscious, witty--all informed by that single word. (Oh, I forgot to mention talent--plain skill--which infuses whatever he has been thinking about.)

If there is another painter whose trajectory parallels Ted's it would be Phillip Guston, whose early work moved into abstraction and then reverted/advanced into socially involved, witty and deadly serious cartoon-like explorations. (Guston's humor was, however, less exuberant than Ted's, more grounded in being grounded.)

The joy of being an artist--a teacher, an enabler as well as a painter--gives Ted's accomplishments a broad range. And through it all the joy has been a sharing one, an understanding that decoration is never enough, that all art that matters must be socially useful.

Edward Albee
N.Y.C. 2006

Introduction

As the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA) celebrates its 50th Anniversary in 2006, it is entirely fitting that we recognize and celebrate the work of Ted Potter as well as his tenure at SECCA. Serving as SECCA's executive director from 1967 to 1991, Potter first changed the name from the Winston-Salem Gallery of Fine Arts to the Gallery of Contemporary Art to better reflect the growth and reputation that he was fostering. In 1974, coinciding with the gift of the James G. Hanes home and formulation of plans to relocate there, Potter again renamed the gallery the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art. Potter not only oversaw the move from the previous headquarters in Old Salem to the Hanes home, but was also responsible for the 1976 gallery addition.

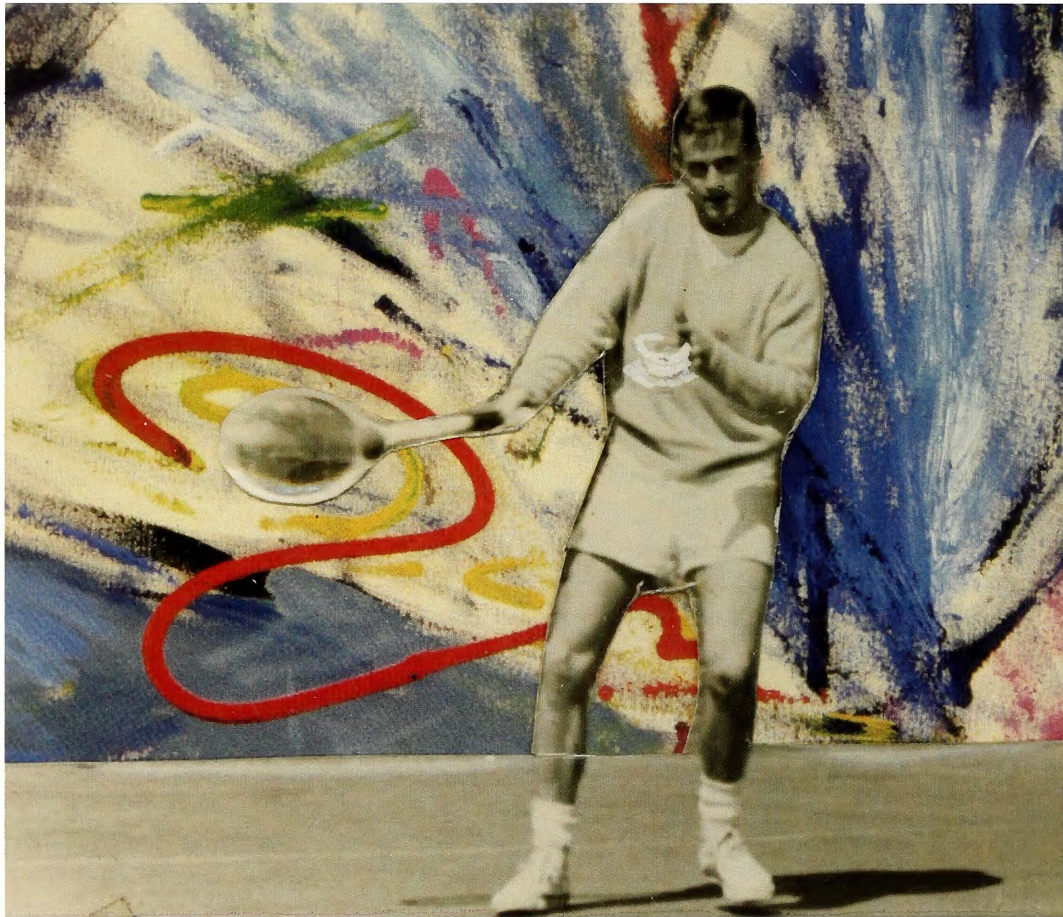
Along with this move and the facility's dramatic enlargement came an ever-expanding purview to exhibit the work of exceptionally talented artists living and working throughout the Southeast. Concurrent with this move and under Potter's leadership, SECCA became one of the first institutions, if not the first, to sponsor fellowships for regional artists, through its Southeast Seven Regional Artists Fellowship Program. At around the same time, Potter was instrumental in developing and establishing an innovative artist-in-residence program under which SECCA collaborated with Wake Forest University and the North Carolina School of the Arts to bring regionally and nationally prominent artists to Winston-Salem.

The Southeast Seven program laid the groundwork for SECCA's Awards in the Visual Arts (AVA) Fellowship Program. National in its scope, the AVA program was designed to honor and recognize the achievements and talents of individual artists throughout the country in the regions where they lived and worked. The AVA Program helped to solidly establish SECCA as an institution of national significance.

Under Potter's leadership SECCA's national reputation continued to grow as his vision again led to the 1990 expansion, with its addition of the Main Gallery and McChesney Scott Dunn Auditorium.

What SECCA is today is still very much tied to Ted Potter's leadership and vision during his time as SECCA's executive director. It is an honor for SECCA to be able to celebrate the career of a true visionary who is also a remarkable painter.

Vicki Kopf
Executive Director



Ted Potter, Self Portrait, College dates: 1950-53, Baker University Tennis team. Mid-American Conference Singles Championships.

The Immediacy of the Game:

Returns, Departures and Other Moves in the Art of Ted Potter

Had it not been for a few practical matters, Ted Potter might well have had a career in professional sports. As a teenager in suburban Chicago in the late 1940s he excelled on his high-school tennis and basketball teams, then performed outstandingly in both sports at Baker University in Baldwin, Kansas. He lettered in basketball and was a Mid-America champion tennis player in all four of his years at that institution. By his own account he was even more skilled at baseball and golf, both of which he played strictly for enjoyment rather than in school-sponsored competition. He says he would have loved to have become a pro golfer or baseball player had either option been available to him. But he lacked the country-club connections that golfers needed in order to become professionals, and his parents weren't affluent enough to support him during the seasons he would have had to spend playing minor-league baseball before moving up to the majors.

For those reasons, Potter opted instead to devote his life to his other favorite activity--making art. As a child he had begun to develop an innate talent for drawing, and his early artistic endeavors were encouraged by his teachers as well as his mother and his father, a Methodist minister. He had continued to draw and paint in his high-school years, and he took as many art courses as he could at Baker, where he graduated in 1954 with a bachelor's degree in psychology and philosophy. At that point he was drafted and stationed for two years with the U.S. Army in Oakland, California, where he took night classes at the California College of Arts and Crafts. Discharged in 1957, he returned to the Midwest and resumed his formal art education at the University of Kansas.

As a child he had begun to develop an innate talent for drawing, and his early artistic endeavors were encouraged by his teachers as well as his mother and his father, a Methodist minister.

After completing a year at UK, Potter gravitated back to the West Coast, in part because of his interest in the figural-expressionist paintings being produced by Elmer Bischoff, David Park and their former student Richard Diebenkorn. All three were living and intermittently teaching in the San Francisco Bay Area, and Potter returned there hoping to study with one or more of them. Although he met and discussed mutual interests with them, it didn't work out for him to enroll in any of their classes. Nonetheless, he returned to his graduate studies, first at the University of California at Berkeley, where he chafed at pressure from the resident art faculty to paint in an Abstract-Expressionist mode. After only three months there, he transferred to the familiar, more esthetically hospitable California College of Arts and Crafts and stayed on to earn his master's degree in 1961.

Unable to find salaried employment in the arts, Potter went to work as a buyer for a British clothing firm for a while, then landed a job in an art gallery in Sausalito. In late 1962 he moved into an apartment in a Victorian house in the heart of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district, which was undergoing a social transformation driven by a steady influx of mostly young, urban bohemians. Within a few years the neighborhood's hyphenated name would become a household word, permanently associated in the American imagination with a freewheeling hippie counterculture. As a formally trained, visually discerning artist living in the center of the action while the action was at its peak, Potter was well positioned to curate a survey show of the art being produced there. In 1966, a San-Francisco-based non-profit organization called the Glide Memorial Foundation hired him to do just that.

Potter's first curatorial effort and the connections that immediately followed from it led him in a previously unforeseen direction and far from the West Coast.

The latter project occupied him for about six months, and early on he applied to the newly established National Endowment for the Arts for a \$2,000 grant to support the exhibition. The NEA's rejection of Potter's appeal was reportedly driven by one powerful member of its national council, actor Charlton Heston, who disapproved of the Haight-Ashbury scene and expressed strong opposition to funding the project. But another council member—arts patron Philip Hanes, of Winston-Salem, North Carolina—was more enthusiastic about Potter's proposal, and after the council declined to authorize NEA funding, Hanes personally underwrote the project. For the exhibition Potter selected works by about thirty artists in styles ranging from traditional realism to Day-Glo abstraction and psychedelic imagery. The proceedings came off as planned at the Glide Memorial United Methodist Church in San Francisco's Tenderloin District in 1967 during the so-called "Summer of Love," attracting large audiences and substantial media attention. During a visit to San Francisco, Hanes saw the show and met Potter, and he still has the mock-up for the flyer advertising the show. It features Potter's handlettered rendition of the title, "Flower Children's Art Bag"—adopted from hippie vernacular expressions that have long since become outdated—and his drawing of flowers tumbling out of an open bag. The mock-up, included in the exhibition, also contains Potter's marginal note inquiring about the identities of Hanes and the NEA.

Potter's first curatorial effort and the connections that immediately followed from it led him in a previously unforeseen direction and far from the West Coast. Back in North Carolina Hanes was involved in supporting a number of hometown arts organizations, including the Winston-Salem Gallery of Fine Arts, a going concern for ten years. The gallery's board had recently decided to professionalize by hiring its first full-time director. Assessing Potter as an ideal candidate, Hanes soon gained the board's support in recruiting him for the job. Potter had also been offered employment as an assistant curator at the Oakland Museum of Art, but he found the prospect of a directorial position more enticing. Moving to Winston-Salem in late 1967, he settled into the new job and launched what became one of the late 20th century's more remarkable American arts-administration careers.

11/16 I'd need 2000 of them!!!
 what's the most. England must & who's P. House?? - F.



Flower Children's Art (mockup for flyer advertising an exhibition curated by the artist), 1966, ink, color pencil and collage on paper, 17 x 15.5 in. Cat. no. 3.

Backed from the outset by generous local patronage, Potter guided the Winston-Salem Gallery of Fine Arts through an extended period of steady growth, increasing sophistication and expanding influence. These trends were reflected in changes he made to the gallery's name. On his arrival he renamed it the Gallery of Contemporary Art, and in 1974 he gave it the designation that stuck--the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art. He oversaw its move from an old bank building to the former James G. Hanes home, which was architecturally augmented to become SECCA's new headquarters in 1977. He established an ambitious exhibitions series, artists' fellowships, frequent lectures and other programs at SECCA during the 1970s and '80s, and he led the drive to build the new wing opened in 1990, adding the Main Gallery, the Overlook Gallery and the McChesney Scott Dunn Auditorium to the facility.

It's not so much that he's anti-New York as that he refuses to acknowledge it as any more important or central to contemporary art than a number of other American cities.

On a personal note, in 1983 he married Laura Carpenter, then SECCA's director of education. After leaving SECCA in 1991, he went on to directorial positions at Florida's Atlantic Center for the Arts, the Contemporary Art Center of New Orleans and Virginia Commonwealth University's Anderson Gallery, which he directed from 1996 until 2005. Since 1996 he has also been an associate professor of art history at VCU's School of Arts.

Raised in the Midwest, artistically nourished on the West Coast and long professionally established in the Southeast, Potter has throughout his career maintained a resolutely independent, borderline-contrarian stance toward New York and its art scene. It's not so much that he's anti-New York as that he refuses to acknowledge it as any more important or central to contemporary art than a number of other American cities.

Potter has ample company among artists who have made their livings as arts administrators. Notwithstanding his formidable accomplishments in the latter role, what sets him apart from much of this company is the extent to which he has remained dedicated to his work in the studio. Despite the considerable demands of directing major art institutions and teaching (not to mention maintaining a busy family life), he has been a relentlessly prolific artist. He has also continued to exhibit regularly, and much of his work has found its way into public and private collections across the United States.

Fifty years after Potter set out to make his way as an artist, with such a substantial body of work behind him and out in the world, his art has been overdue for a proper retrospective showing. It's fitting that it finally receives such treatment at SECCA, in the gallery that was the centerpiece of Potter's crowning achievement as SECCA's director.

* * * * *

Ted Potter began his career in the era when American art was dominated by New-York-school Abstract Expressionism. He experimented with abstraction as an undergraduate student, but like many of his artistic contemporaries, he soon came to feel stifled by the New York school's



Trustees For Life (Mrs. Archie "Big Mama" Van Dorf, Board President; Spencer "Buddy" Van Dorf, Board Treasurer), 2004, acrylic and paint tube on canvas, 60 x 60 in. Cat. no. 62.

monolithic influence. The artists with whom he felt the strongest kinship at that time were those of the Bay Area figurative school, as they've come to be known, and it was their presence that led him to establish himself early on in the San Francisco Bay Area. With its focus on anonymous figures rendered in boldly gestural strokes, much of Potter's art from the late 1950s through the 1960s fits comfortably within the parameters of that West Coast movement. He acknowledges the frontal figures in paintings by Nathan Oliveira, a prominent Bay Area painter, as having been an influence at the time.

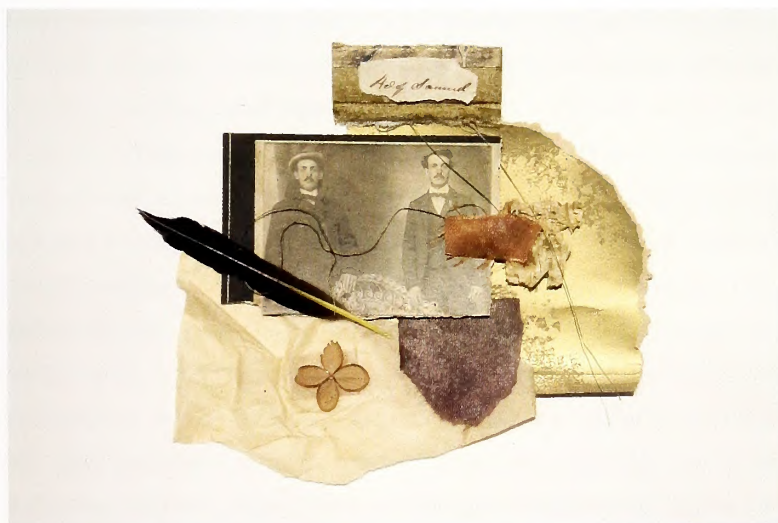
The frontally viewed figure is a motif to which Potter repeatedly returned over the next twenty years, even as his work continued to evolve stylistically. He attributes his sustained exploration of such imagery to an interest in communicating directly with viewers. In this first phase of his career, his main strategy for creating a sense of visual interplay between viewer and image was to render figures posed as if returning the beholder's gaze. They weren't portraits per se, because they didn't represent particular individuals, and in most cases it was up to viewers to imagine the eyes and other facial features. He has said that he often omitted such features or left them vaguely defined in order to give the figures more psychological impact.



The Poet, His Muse, and Her Purse (portrait of Jonathan Williams), 1974, acrylic on canvas, approx. 60 x 48 in. Cat. no. 17.

While the human figure remained central to Potter's art until the late 1970s, his work changed in other ways. Unable to afford the time and materials needed to paint on a regular basis during his first few years out of graduate school, his efforts at that time consisted mostly of drawings. It wasn't until he came to North Carolina that he settled down to painting in any kind of systematic manner. In the paintings he began to produce in Winston-Salem he exerted fairly tight control over the imagery, downplaying gestural, expressionistic elements. These paintings tend to be cleanly linear and minimally shaded, with clearly defined, individuated figures. These developments had parallels in other 1960s painting, including Pop Art and what is sometimes known as New Realism, but for Potter they were driven simply by necessity. The demands of directing a regional art gallery limited the time he had for his own art, and by painting in this flat, non-gestural style he was able to work more quickly. He was also able to economize on his studio time--and his production costs--by painting mostly in enamel on wood instead of oil on canvas.

It's no accident that Potter's paintings from this period are reminiscent of family photographs. During those years and since then he has collected early, anonymous examples of this vernacular art form. He has used a number of these antique snapshots and photographic studio portraits in the intimately scaled collages he has made throughout his career, regardless of how he happened to be painting at any given time. These collages--which also incorporate such components as feathers, old postage stamps and scraps of fabric--haven't been formally shown prior to this exhibition. Representing a more whimsically personal dimension of Potter's artistry, they're nostalgically referenced, chromatically restrained and smaller than most of his other work, but they possess their own quiet visual power.



The Lassiter Twins (Adolf/Samuel), 1988, collage with photograph, feather, birch bark and seed pod, 11.25 x 14.25 in. Cat. no. 41.



Great Aunt Emma Hasn't Missed A Salem Football Game Since 1904, 1986, photograph, collage and dried plant matter, 11.5 x 14.5 in. Cat. no. 36.



Ted Potter, 1961, California College of Arts & Crafts, Berkeley California. Graduate School-MFA. Photo by Roy Scott.



Blue Up, 1989, oil on canvas, 60 x 72 in. Cat. no. 45.

By the late 1970s Potter was growing restless with figural painting. Despite a renewed emphasis on such art in the New York galleries and national art magazines, he chose that moment to veer off in a direction that seemed radically different. Having painted figures for more than twenty years, he found himself increasingly curious to experience the challenge of making coherent, non-objective paintings. Because Abstract Expressionism had long since ceased to be the hot, controversial phenomenon it was during his formative years, he decided to treat it as fair game for adaptation to his own creative needs at that time. Eager to try painting on a larger scale, he commissioned about a dozen stretched canvases measuring five to six feet square. For this series he chose to work with oils, but he substantially diluted them in order to render them more easily manipulable. Further varying his accustomed approach, he placed the big canvases face-up on the floor, then poured and dripped the thinned oil colors directly onto these surfaces and let them steep, the colors spreading and intermingling as they saturated the canvas. In many cases he used the resultant expanses of overlapping stains as a ground for geometric shapes and spontaneously gestural markings, sometimes made by squeezing paint directly from the tube onto the canvas. It was an experimental, ultimately playful process that invited and took advantage of accidents. In his own distinctive brand of action painting, he treated the surfaces of these paintings as stages or playing fields to be charged and energized with shapes, gestures (such as his distinctive, lightning-bolt squiggles) and colors. His enthusiasm for this more free-form, experimental way of painting was strong enough to keep him artistically occupied for some time. Because he began exhibiting widely after he made this stylistic departure, and his paintings began entering numerous collections, he is known mainly for these abstract works, and they're well represented in this retrospective. His largest such painting, and one of the last to be completed, is *I-TAT* (1997), included here. It's a formidable painting, unquestionably a highlight of his career, and he considers it his penultimate statement in this abstract mode.

Like the first broad phase of Potter's work, defined by its emphasis on the human figure, this second, post-abstract-expressionist phase lasted for about twenty years. Then, in synch with the new millennium, Potter made a somewhat abrupt turn--or return--back to figural painting. Only this time (of course), it was with a new twist. The change was occasioned by an idea to make some paintings about his experiences and observations in the contemporary-art world. Titled "Inside the Ropes," in reference to his own insider's viewpoint, it has taken shape over the last six years as an open-ended series of satirical portraits, all depicting people who occupy particular cultural, organizational or social roles in the art world.

Comparable in scale to his big abstract canvases of the 1980s and '90s, these most recent works engage the viewer on at least two levels--as very lively, figural-expressionist paintings, and as outsized, single-panel cartoons, in all cases sending up the politics and social underpinnings of the contemporary American art world. The narratives implied in these canvases extend to their titles, which in most cases function like cartoon captions or punch lines, and in that sense are integral to the paintings. The humor that underlies the series is simultaneously wicked and affectionate.

The "Inside the Ropes" paintings reflect Potter's belief that people in the arts -- artists, art administrators, board members, curators, critics, art students and patrons -- tend to take themselves far too seriously and could stand to laugh at themselves more often.

Potter says he began the series simply because he felt a need to exercise that sense of humor in his art, and a desire to portray on canvas something of what it has been like to spend a lifetime presenting art shows, writing grants, overseeing directorial boards, supervising curators, courting patrons and negotiating with artists and dealers. To some extent the series has its roots in hand-captioned photocopy collages that he has made over the years for his own amusement and that of colleagues likely to appreciate their humor, typically aimed at the same kinds of art-world targets he zeroes in on in these paintings. To date he has completed sixteen paintings in this serial body of work. He says he has ideas for about twenty more, but he's not sure he wants to keep the series going.

The "Inside the Ropes" paintings reflect Potter's belief that people in the arts--artists, art administrators, board members, curators, critics, art students and patrons--tend to take themselves far too seriously and could stand to laugh at themselves more often. They're amusing parodies of standard art-world scenarios, but they're also serious paintings in more than one respect. They raise important issues regarding the dynamics of power as played out in the art world, and they're esthetically noteworthy for their successful fusion of abstract and figural technique. In addition to the figures and narratives that are their focal points, they incorporate strategies derived from abstract painting, as evidenced by their loosely delineated borders and free-floating, peripheral abstract forms set off against gesturally painted or patterned backgrounds. In the latter respect these paintings form a continuum with and a synthesis of Potter's previous work in both abstract and figural veins.



Black Out, 1989, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 in. Cat. no. 44.

Potter's willingness to poke fun at himself along with everyone else in the art world finds expression in *The Opening*. Set in a gallery at an art show's opening reception, it depicts a man and his wife standing before a large, abstract canvas obviously intended to represent one of Potter's own abstract paintings of a few years ago. The man appears delighted by this big abstract composition, but his pallid, wine-sipping wife looks conspicuously unimpressed, and the caution-light-yellow outline that surrounds her further sets her apart from the rest of the action. She's clearly the implied speaker of the painting's parenthetical subtitle, "If you buy that I'll leave you." One imagines her quietly hissing those words, so as not to be overheard, perhaps, by the other figure in the foreground. No doubt intended to represent the artist, this third figure wears a turtleneck and clings possessively to the arm of his painting's potential buyer.

These boldly chromatic, abstract elements--like floating bits of illuminated neon--reflect Potter's unabashed love of color.

The humor temporarily recedes into the background in another painting from the series that can also be seen as a self-portrait. The subject of *The Buffer Zone (In the Studio)*, as it's titled, is an artist in creative seclusion, standing in his studio among open cans and jars of paint, one of which has tipped over to spill a torrent of blue from the edge of a tabletop defined by a T-square horizontally attached to the left side of the canvas. Like the figures in some of Potter's earlier drawings, this one is frontally portrayed and faceless, but he is identified with Potter by virtue of the variously colored, free-floating forms and spontaneous, gestural markings that surround him and activate much of the painting's surface. Here these hallmarks of Potter's more abstract work seem like independent entities hovering in the air of the studio and awaiting their magical conversion into paint transferred onto canvas. These boldly chromatic, abstract elements--like floating bits of illuminated neon--reflect Potter's unabashed love of color. As depicted here, this sanctuary where the solitary artist occupies himself with such concerns seems worlds away from the more public arena where most of the other paintings in the series are set.

Humor is also downplayed in the latest, largest and most ambitious painting in the series, *The Board Visionary/The High Jumper*. Completed only a few weeks before this exhibition opened, it's roughly twice the size of others in the series. The setting is a meeting room, where members of a trustees' or directors' board--presumably of a non-profit arts center like SECCA--are gathered around a table. The central figure in this gathering--probably intended to represent the executive director or board president--sits facing the viewer at the head of the table. This seated figure's face and head, though, are obscured by another figure bewilderingly suspended in mid-air, evidently back-flipping over the table. As the painting's title implies, this backwards-leaping figure isn't intended to represent a literal, physical body--say an entertainer hired to enliven the proceedings. It functions instead as a metaphor for progressive, visionary thinking--a



The Opening ("If you buy that I'll leave you") (from "Inside the Ropes" series), 2001, oil on canvas, 72 x 60 in. Cat. no. 55.

groundbreaking idea or plan that inspires the man at the center of the meeting. The whole indoor panorama is scattered with what looks like windblown confetti or flower petals, hinting at an atmosphere charged with powerful forces connected to the presentation of this bold idea or plan. In view of Potter's own career history in arts administration--and particularly his twenty-five-year tenure at SECCA--it's easy to read the painting as another self-portrait.

Prominent among the features that distinguish this outsized painting is its light-infused color scheme, which also serves to further emphasize its central theme of visionary thinking. The boardroom appears to be flooded with springtime sunlight, and the painting's floral colors subtly evoke related themes of blossoming and new growth.

When I first saw this painting in early June, Potter was finishing work on it in his studio in Richmond. Rolled out on the floor in front of it was a similarly wide expanse of butcher paper on which his and Laura's twin six-year-old-daughters, Kenan and Sarah, had intermittently painted during visits to the studio in recent months. With their spontaneously drawn images and bright tempera colors--red, green, yellow, blue and orange--the girls' drawings appeared to have influenced the loosely relaxed figuration, exuberant palette and joyously chaotic composition that characterizes their dad's latest painting.

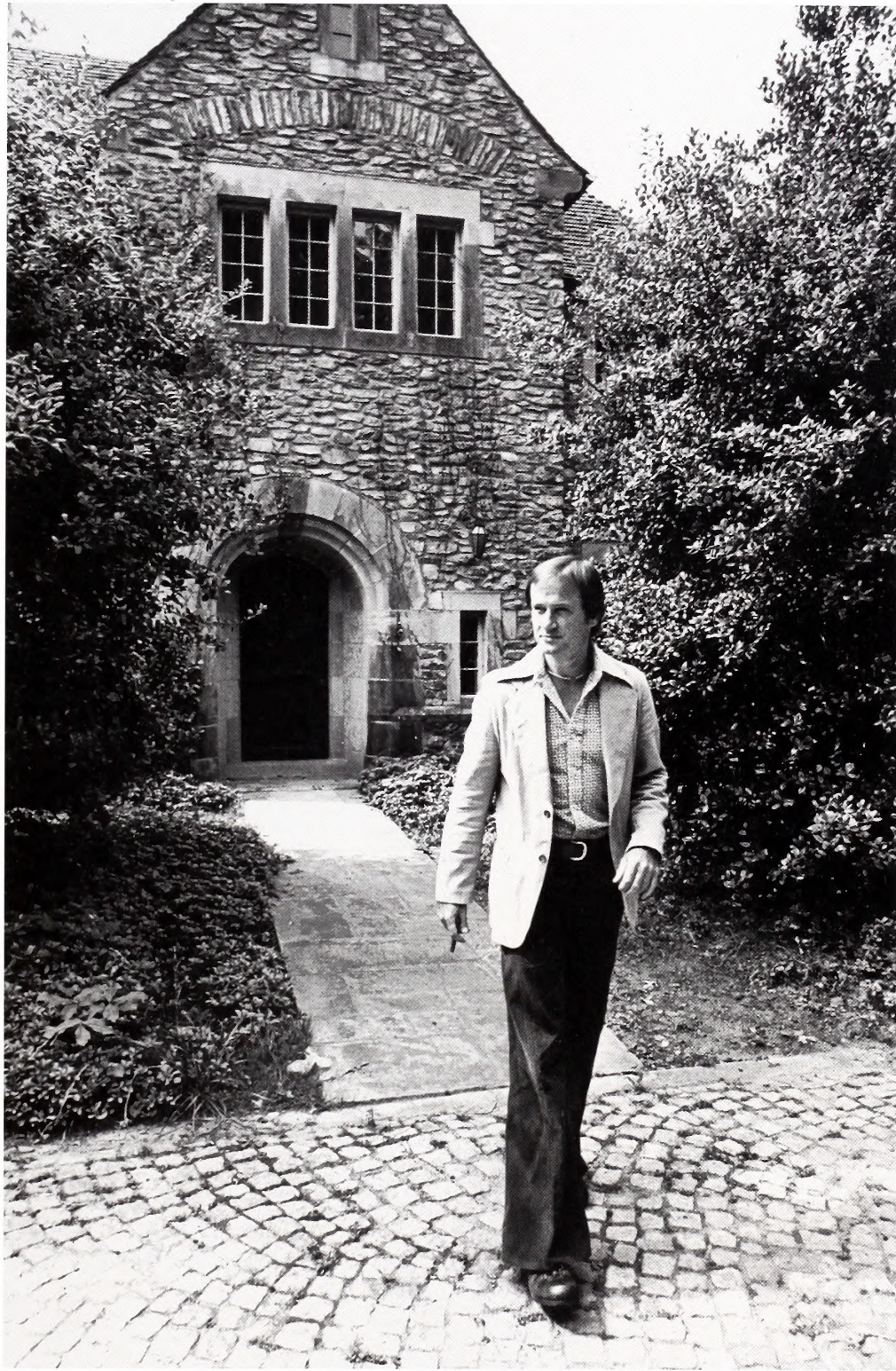
"The immediacy of the game--that's what I love about it."

The leaping, mid-air figure in this painting is derived from one of Potter's early drawings, *High Jump* (ca. 1960), which was too fragile to include in the exhibition. The drawing was inspired by Potter's viewing of televised track-and-field events in the summer Olympic Games, and his fascination with the sense of building tension followed by an explosion of energy that characterizes such events. He sees a strong metaphorical link between this athletic process and his own approach to his art. Although he long ago left behind dreams of becoming a sports professional, he has retained a strong interest in sports and athletics. Even recently, weakened by ongoing cancer treatments, he has continued to spend one day each week playing an eighteen-hole round of golf. He appreciates the concentration, the discipline, and the combination of strategy and spontaneity that such activities require, and he points out that these same requirements apply to making art. The energy that a tennis champion or an Olympic high-jumper draws on in an event's decisive moments is the same energy that Potter channels in applying paint to canvas, and it's an energy that he feels is ultimately magical.

Using yet another sports metaphor to characterize his relationship to his work, Potter says, "The immediacy of the game--that's what I love about it."

As this exhibition makes clear, it is our good fortune that he has remained so passionately engaged for the last fifty years. Bringing together more than sixty examples of work made over the course of his highly active, bi-level career seems an appropriate way to celebrate the milestone. Congratulations and toasts are in order. And a rousing cheer from the stands.

Tom Patterson
Guest Curator



Ted Potter, 1976, Photo taken at James G. Hanes Estate. SECCA Director from 1967-1991.



The Board Visionary/The High Jumper (from "Inside the Ropes" series), 2006, acrylic on canvas, 78 x 108 in. Cat. no. 63.



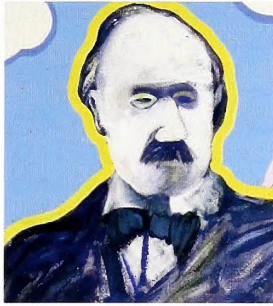
The Immediacy of the Game:

50 Years of Ted Potter's Art

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:

1. *Seated Ofa*, 1966, India ink on paper, 10 x 8 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.
2. *Jugglers*, ca. 1960s, oil on paper over Masonite, 50 x 43.5 in. Collection of Rosemary Harris and John Ehle, Winston-Salem.
3. *Flower Children's Art Bag* (mockup for flyer advertising an exhibition curated by the artist), 1967; ink, color pencil and collage on paper, 17 x 15.5 in. Collection of Charlotte and Philip Hanes, Winston-Salem.
4. *What's Better Than One Guru? Two Gurus!*, 1968, oil on canvas, 52 x 50.5 in. Courtesy of the Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County.
5. *The Dudmans (Ed and Edna)*, 1969, enamel on wood, 46.5 x 35.5 in. Collection of Charlotte and Philip Hanes, Winston-Salem.
6. *Beach*, ca. 1970, enamel on wood, 34.75 x 45 in. Collection of Perry and Thorns Craven, Winston-Salem.
7. *Untitled* (from "Family Portraits" series), ca. 1970, 22 x 22 in. Collection of Perry and Thorns Craven, Winston-Salem.
8. *Untitled* (from "Family Portraits" series), ca. 1970, 22 x 22 in. Collection of Perry and Thorns Craven, Winston-Salem.
9. *Untitled* (from "Family Portraits" series), ca. 1970, 22 x 22 in. Collection of Perry and Thorns Craven, Winston-Salem.
10. *Untitled*, (from "Family Portraits" series), ca. 1970, 22 x 22 in. Collection of Perry and Thorns Craven, Winston-Salem.
11. *Banker Man*, ca. 1971, mixed mediums on paper, 22.5 x 22.5 in. Collection of Mattie and Milton Rhodes, Winston-Salem.
12. *The Committee (L to R: Incoming, Outgoing and Past President)*, 1971 enamel on wood, 35 x 45.25 in. Collection of Mattie and Milton Rhodes, Winston-Salem.
13. *Joseph Lewis, alias "Hungry Joe"* (from "Professional Criminals of America" series), 1971, color pencil and paper collage, 24 x 24 in. Collection of Bingle and Douglas Lewis, Winston-Salem.
14. *Louisa Jordan, Pickpocket and Shoplifter* (from "Professional Criminals of America" series), 1971, charcoal, color pencil and collage on paper, 20.25 x 20.25 in. Collection of Anne and Howard Shields, Winston-Salem.
15. *The Park Girls: Minnie, Ruth, Prudence, Alice and Maud*, 1971, enamel on wood, 35 x 45 in. Collection of Bingle and Douglas Lewis, Winston-Salem.
16. *Seated Man*, pastel and pencil on paper, 1974, 28.75 x 22.25 in. Collection of Tog and Michael Newman, Winston-Salem.
17. *The Poet, His Muse and Her Purse* (portrait of Jonathan Williams), 1974, acrylic on canvas, approx. 60 x 48 in. Collection of Jane and Eldridge Hanes, Winston-Salem.





18. *I Love My Mother and Father, But I like My Nanny Best*, ca. 1970s, oil on canvas, 52.5 x 48 inches. Collection of Rosemary Harris and John Ehle, Winston-Salem.

19. *Alice*, 1978, photograph and collage, 11.5 x 14.5 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

20. *Landscape with Small Person*, 1978, photograph and paper collage, 11 x 14 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

21. *Untitled*, 1978, collage with postage stamps and fabric, 14 x 11 in. Collection of Charlotte and Philip Hanes, Winston-Salem.

22. *Christmas Passed*, 1979, photograph, collage and feather, 11.5 x 14.5 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

23. *Lumina and Child*, 1979, photograph and collage, 11.5 x 14.5 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

24. *The Morn (Times)*, 1979, photograph and collage, 13.5 x 15.5 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

25. *Mrs. Scott*, 1979, photography, feather and paper collage, 11.5 x 14.5 in. Collection of Bingle and Douglas Lewis, Winston-Salem.

26. *Then*, 1979, photograph and collage, 11.5 x 14.5 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

27. *Corn Close Feld*, 1984, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 in. Collection of Ann and F. Borden Hanes Jr., Winston-Salem.

28. *The Song & Dance Team*, 1984, collage with photograph and sheet music, 12 1/8 x 9.25 in. Collection of Coy C. Carpenter, Winston-Salem.

29. *Calgary Dawn*, 1985, oil on paper, approx. 47.5 x 32.5 in. Collection of Bowen Hanes & Company, Winston-Salem.

30. *Corn Close Fall*, 1985, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 in. Collection of Mary Charles and Robert Boyette, Raleigh; courtesy of Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

31. *Priory Mew*, 1985, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 in. Collection of Ramelle and Michael Pulitzer, Winston-Salem.

32. *Untitled*, 1985, oil on paper, 45 x 30 in. Collection of Ranlet and Frank Bell, Winston-Salem.

33. *Carolina Early Spring*, 1986, acrylic on paper, 40 x 25 in. Collection of Kelly and Chet Shifflet, Marlinton, West Virginia.

34. *Expansion*, 1986, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 in. Collection of Ranlet and Frank Bell, Winston-Salem.

35. *Expansion #4 (or Sissing Hurst #3)*, 1986, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 in. Collection of Perry and Thorns Craven, Winston-Salem.

36. *Great Aunt Emma Hasn't Missed a Salem Football Game Since 1904*, 1986, photograph, collage and dried plant matter, 11.5 x 14.5 in. Collection of Margaret Kenan Carpenter, Silver Springs, Maryland.





37. *Sarah, 1919 (Mrs. Barnette Lloyd Sr.)*, 1986, photograph, collage and dried plant matter, 11.5 x 14.5 in. Collection of Michelle and David Carpenter, Northridge, California.

38. *Untitled*, 1986, oil on paper, 48 x 34.5 in. Collection of Nancy Hanes and Monty White, Raleigh; courtesy of Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

39. *Earthcott*, 1987, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 in. Collection of Louise and Banks Talley, Raleigh; courtesy of Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

40. *Blue Ridge Setting*, 1988, oil on paper, 30.25 x 45.25 in. Collection of Diane and David Eshelman, Winston-Salem.

41. *The Lassiter Twins (Adof/Samuel)*, 1988, collage with photograph, feather, birch bark and seed pod, 11.25 x 14.25 in. Collection of Coy C. Carpenter, Winston-Salem.

42. *Tritatt*, 1988, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 in. Collection of Barbara and Tom McGuire, Raleigh; courtesy of Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

43. *Untitled*, 1988, oil on paper, 48 x 34.5 in. Collection of Ann and F. Borden Hanes Jr., Winston-Salem.

44. *Black-out*, 1989, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 in. Collection of Schooner Nowell, Raleigh; courtesy of Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

45. *Blue-Up*, 1989, oil on canvas, 60 x 72 in. Collection of Margaret Scales and Graydon Pleasants, Winston-Salem.

46. *A Little Yellow Sucker*, 1990, photograph and paper collage, 18 x 16 in. Collection of Diane and David Eshelman, Winston-Salem.

47. *Frankie Dunbar's 1st Day*, 1991; collage with photograph and lace, 17.25 x 17.25 in. Collection of Katherine and Donald Memory, Winston-Salem.

48. *Untitled* (from "New Orleans Winter" series), 1997, acrylic and collage on paper, 26.5 x 26.5 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

49. *Untitled* (from "New Orleans Winter" series), 1997, acrylic and collage on paper, 26.5 x 26.5 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

50. *I-TAT*, 1997; oil, enamel and acrylic on canvas, 78 x 108 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

51. *Un-Title*, 1999, acrylic on canvas, 72 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

52. *The Art Auction*, (from "Inside the Ropes" series), 2001, acrylic on canvas, 72 X 84 in. Collection of Ramelle and Michael Pulitzer, Winston-Salem.

53. *The Art Students (Lenny, J.J. and Leah)* (from "Inside the Ropes" series), 2001, acrylic on canvas, 66 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

54. *The Curators (Jeremy Plump and A. Constance Paine)* (from "Inside the Ropes" series), 2001, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.



55. *The Opening* ("If you buy that I'll leave you") (from "Inside the Ropes" series), 2001, oil on canvas, 72 x 60 in. Collection of Carole and Cloyce Anders, Raleigh, courtesy of Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

56. *Picking Up the Visiting New York Art Star* ("But how will I recognize him? " 'Easy, he'll be the one dressed in all black!") (from "Inside the Ropes" series), 2001, acrylic on canvas, 66 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

57. *The Art Critic* (Harvey "No Clue" Benson) (from "Inside the Ropes" series), 2002, acrylic on canvas, 72 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

58. *Dedication of the New F. Wellborne Bucks Wing* (Museum Director Bernard Grubbs and the Widow Emily "Lotta" Bucks) (from "Inside the Ropes" series), 2002, acrylic on canvas, 66 x 60.5 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

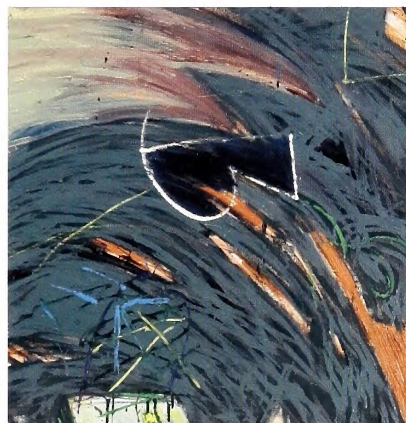
59. *The Gallery Dealer and "Her" Artist* (from "Inside the Ropes" series), 2002, oil on paper and Plexiglas, 56.5 x 44.5 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

60. *The Officers of the Guild at the Annual Members' Coffee* (Mildred Towncar, Treasurer; Blanche Pierpoint Harriman, President; and Wilma "Kiki" Monroe, Secretary) (from "Inside the Ropes" series), 2002, acrylic on canvas, 66 x 60 in. Collection of Lee Hansley, Raleigh.

61. *The Buffer Zone* (from "Inside the Ropes" series), 2002-2003, acrylic on canvas, 72 x 68.25 in. Courtesy of Laura, Kenan and Sarah Potter, Richmond.

62. *Trustees for Life* (Mrs. Archie "Big Mama" Van Dorf, Board President; Spencer "Buddy" Van Dorf, Board Treasurer), (from "Inside the Ropes" series), 2004, acrylic and paint tube on canvas, 60 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

63. *The Board Visionary/The High Jumper* (from "Inside the Ropes" series), 2006, acrylic on canvas, 78 x 108 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.



CAREER HISTORY

Ted Potter

Born 1932, Springhill, Kansas

Resides in Richmond, Virginia

Education:

California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, M.F.A., 1961

University of California, Berkeley, 1959

University of Kansas, Lawrence, 1957-1958

Baker University, Baldwin, Kansas, B.F.A., 1954

Art-related Experience:

1996-2005 Director, Anderson Gallery, Associate Professor, School of Arts, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond

1993-1996 Executive Director, Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans

1991-1993 Executive Director, Atlantic Center for the Arts, New Smyrna Beach, Florida

1967-1991 Executive Director, Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA), Winston-Salem, North Carolina

1965-1967 Executive Art Director, Glide Memorial Foundation, San Francisco

1963-present Exhibiting Artist

Institutional Grants:

Absolut Vodka

American Express

BMW of North America

Equitable Life Assurance Society

Florida Humanities Council

Ford Foundation

Freeport MacMoran Corporation

James G. Hanes Foundation

Kreege Foundation

Lannan Foundation

Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund

Louisiana Division of Cultural Affairs

National Endowment for the Arts

National Endowment for the Humanities

North Carolina Arts Council

Pew Charitable Trust

Rockefeller Foundation

Selected Solo Exhibitions:

2006 "The Immediacy of the Game: 50 Years of Ted Potter's Art," Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

2003 "Inside the Ropes," organized by Jacqueline Bishop, University of New Orleans and Lee Hansley Gallery; Raleigh, North Carolina; traveled to the Fine Arts Gallery, University of New Orleans; DeLand Museum of Art, DeLand, Florida, and Charlotte and Philip Hanes Art Gallery, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

1999 "Ted Potter: New Paintings," Virginia Tech, Blacksburg

1996 "New Paintings," Galerie Simonne Stern, New Orleans

1992 "New Work," Marita Gilliam Gallery, Raleigh, North Carolina

1991 Henri Gallery, Washington, D.C.

Initiatives:

- 1980-1992 Awards in the Visual Arts 1-10 Emerging Artists Program (National), Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina
- 1976-1982 Rockefeller Foundation Artists-in-Residence Program, Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Wake Forest University, and the North Carolina School of the Arts, Winston-Salem, North Carolina
- 1975-1989 Southeast Seven 1-12 Artists Fellowship Program (Southeast), funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and R.J. Reynolds Industries, Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Exhibitions as organizer/curator:

Produced and curated over 130 exhibitions for various contemporary institutions

Lectures:

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York
American Council for the Arts, New York
Carnegie Mellon University Art Gallery, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans, Louisiana
Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
Denver Museum of Art, Colorado
Duke University, Durham, North Carolina
Gray Art Gallery, New York
Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois
National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.
The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond
Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Panels:

Challenge Grant Panel (two), National Endowment for the Arts
Federal Art-in-Architecture Panel (four), General Services Administration/National Endowment for the Arts
National Artists Fellowships Panel, (two) National Endowment for the Arts
National Committee on the Individual Artist, American Council for the Arts,
National Crafts Panel, National Endowment for the Arts
National Exhibition Committee, American Federation for the Arts,
National Service to the Field Panel (four), National Endowment for the Arts
National Works of Art in Public Places Panel, National Endowment for the Arts
Steering Committee, Arts Advocates of North Carolina
Visual Arts Advisory Council, Southern Arts Federation (Atlanta, Georgia)

Boards:

Black Mountain College Trust (North Carolina)
Black Museum National Hall of Fame (New Orleans)
Diggs Gallery of Art, Winston-Salem State University
Executive Committee, Jargon Society (small press)
International Program Council, International Sculpture Center
Internal Advisory Council, Contemporary Museum of International Art
National Advisory Council, Atlantic Center for the Arts
National Council, National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts

Consultations:

BMW of North America, Inc.
Burroughs Wellcome Corporation
Equitable Life Assurance Society
Federal Reserve Bank (Washington, D.C.)
Hanes Corporation
North Carolina Museum of Art (Raleigh)
IBM

Bibliography:

- 1994 "Ted Potter Sets a Fresh Course," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, Louisiana
1993 "Art in the '90's: Interview with Ted Potter," *Daytona News Journal*, Florida
1992 *Culture and Democracy*, with Maya Angelou, Samuel Lipman, Donald Kuspit, Hans Haacke, editor Andrew Buchwater, Westview Press
 "The Political Aesthetic," *Florida State University Journal*
 "The Care and Feeding of Exhibition Judges," *Daytona News Journal*, Florida
1991 "Interview with Ted Potter," *Charlotte Observer*, North Carolina
1990 "Limits on Artistic Freedom," keynote address, debate with Grace Glueck and Congressman Henry Hyde, Atlantic Center for the Arts
 "The Impulse to Censor," *News and Observer*, Raleigh, North Carolina
1989 "Guns and Horses: Interview with Ted Potter," *Art Papers*
 "At the Center of the Storm: SECCA Director Ted Potter on Serrano, Wildmon, Helms, Mapplethorpe, censorship and government arts funding," *The Arts Journal: North Carolina's Arts Monthly*
1988 "What Makes SECCA Run," *Winston-Salem Magazine*
1987 "Honoring American Artists," *Southern Accents*
1986 "Ted Potter and Eric Anderson," *New Art Examiner*
1982 "Awards in the Visual Arts: Raising the Veil Across America," *Smithsonian*
1977 "Focus on Contemporary Art," *Contemporary Art Southeast*
1974 "Making It Outside New York," *ARTnews*

Guest Curator

Tom Patterson is a freelance writer, art critic and independent curator who has followed and occasionally written about Ted Potter's work as an artist and arts administrator since the early 1980s. As a resident of Winston-Salem since 1984, the visual-art columnist for the *Winston-Salem Journal* since 1988 and a frequent contributor to art magazines covering the southeastern United States, he closely tracked Potter's final years at SECCA. Patterson is the author of several books on contemporary American folk or "outsider" art, and his writings have appeared in art periodicals including *Afterimage*, *American Craft*, *ARTnews*, *Art Papers*, *BOMB*, *Folk Art*, *New Art Examiner* and *Raw Vision*.



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Exhibition curated by Tom Patterson

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Cover: Ted Potter, *The Board Visionary/The High Jumper* (from the "Inside the Ropes" series), 2006 (detail), acrylic on canvas, 78 x 108 in. Courtesy of the artist, Richmond; and Lee Hansley Gallery, Raleigh.

